(a) whether Government would agree to ban procurement of foodgrains from farmers by private companies and middlemen; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The Government agencies procure from farmers the foodgrains conforming to FAQ specifications at Minimum Support Price (MSP). As per Government policy farmers are free to sell their produce to the Government agencies at MSP or to private agencies, as is advantageous to them. Therefore, the Government do not propose to ban procurement of foodgrains from farmers by agencies other than Government agencies.

(b) Does not arise.

Edible oil prices

†1298. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a significant slump in the prices of edible oils in the international market during the period of August-November, 2008;

(b) if so, the average prices of different edible oils in international market during the said period;

(c) whether those prices were less to the prices of edible oils in India;

(d) if so, the fact in this regard and whether Government has curbed the import of edible oils by raising the import duty on it; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per information available, the prices of edible oils in the international market during the period of August-November, 2008 have been as under :-

(FOB in US $ per ton)

Month	Monthly average prices of edible oils in international market		
	RBD Palmolein	Soyabean oil	Sunflower oil
August, 2008	927	1150	1245
September, 2008	782	1029	1109
October, 2008	589	876	866
November, 2008	512	722	745

(c) to (e) As per information available, the prices of edible oils in the international market and in India during the period of August- November, 2008 have been as under :-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(Price per ton)

Month	Monthly average prices of edible oils					
	In international market * (FOB in terms of rupee)			In India (in rupee)		
	RBD Palmolein	Soyabean oil	Sunflower oil	RBD Palmolein	Soyabean oil	Sunflower oil
August, 2008	39842	49427	53510	48030	55330	58260
September, 2008	35604	46850	50493	44240	52240	57830
October, 2008	28578	42503	42018	37310	44730	57920
November, 2008	25175	35501	36632	31810	38100	57850

* Taking into account monthly average dollar conversion rate in rupee.

In order to harmonise the interests of farmers, consumers and processors, the availability, price situation and duty structure of edible oils are reviewed from time to time. Import duty on crude soyabean oil has been raised from nil to 20% *w.e.f.* 18.11.2008.

De-regulation of sugar industry

1299. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the recent AGM of the Indian Sugar Mills Association, sugar industry had demanded complete de-regulation of the sugar industry;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether Allahabad High Court has questioned the basis of the formula of State advise price for sugarcane farmers; and

(d) if so, what would be the minimum support price for sugarcane farmers and what would be the fate of pending arrears of farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) in its last Annual General Meeting (AGM) has, *inter alia,* demanded de-regulation in certain aspects. The Government has not taken a view on their demand.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) M/s Basti Sugar Mills Company Ltd. and a number of other private sugar factories in Uttar Pradesh challenged the State Advised Price (SAP) fixed by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for 2006-07 sugar season. The Hon'ble Allahabad High Court in its judgement dated 19.12.2007 quashed the circular/notification of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. In an appeal filed against the said judgement of Allahabad High Court, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its interim order dated 7.9.2008 has directed cane price payment at Rs. 110 per quintal without any deduction on account of